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ABSTRACT

This monograph on minority languages and bilingualism focuses on seven minority languages in different parts of the world, looking at their history and current status, including patterns of usage among samples of their speakers. The first two chapters discuss several issues regarding diglossia and bilingualism, language patterns within societies, and language maintenance and choice. Three subsequent chapters look more closely at these areas: similarities, differences, and sociolinguistic trends in Celtic languages, specifically Gaelic, Welsh, and Breton; a similar comparison of three Romance languages (Romansh, Friulan, Galician); and patterns and trends in Pennsylvania German. A chapter is devoted to explanation of the research methodology used in these analyses. Chapter 7 examines the effect of subculture variables (age/generation, social class, gender, rural/urban areas, date of interview) on language loyalty and maintenance, and includes statistical analyses. Chapter 8 contains a less quantitative, more impressionistic assessment of the language socialization process and the effects of cultural cross-pressures and attitudes on language use and maintenance. A concluding chapter discusses these findings, and implications for minority languages and language planning. Appended materials contain further notes on methodology and the geographic composition of native speaker samples. Contains substantial bibliography and an index. (MSE)

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